

Grass vetchling is a native plant with a population stronghold in southern England although it is generally uncommon and declining (Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, 2004). In Scotland it is a rare plant and because of this it has been assumed that plants in Scotland are introductions (Perring & Walters, 1990). How grass vetchling became established at Dalmonach is unknown but judging from the size of the colony it must have been present for many years.

New housing developments have been consuming green spaces in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven at a rapid rate since the mid 1990's. The Jamestown area in particular has attracted developers and several new estates have sprung up in recent years. With the possible development of Dalmonach for housing and the destruction of the site it was decided that a rescue attempt would be made to safeguard the grass vetchling.

In 1994 and 1995 seed was collected from the threatened site. The collection of seed was a collaborative project between the Dumbarton District Council Leven Valley Initiative Ranger Service, proposed developers of the site and myself as the then Nature Conservation Officer for the River Valleys Strategy (Scottish Natural Heritage/ Strathclyde Regional Council). Grass vetchling is an annual and therefore seed would be a more effective way to store and transfer plant material to another suitable site.

An investigation of similar grassland sites to the donor site revealed that the semi-natural grassland at the Brucehill Cliff, Dumbarton (NS384752) was regarded as the most suitable to host the grass vetchling. The location was unlikely to be developed as it was a former landfill site and was likely to be conserved for wildlife as a proposed Local Nature Reserve and maintained as greenspace for the community.

The collected seed of the grass vetchling was sown at one location at the new site directly onto an area of wet, marshy grassland without disturbing the habitat and plant life present. The distance between the donor site and receiver site was 6km and both sites occurred within the same drainage catchment area of the River Leven. Seed was also donated to the SWT Urban Wildlife, Jupiter Project at Grangemouth.

Although there is evidence that many translocation attempts are failures (Pearman & Walker, 2004) this particular grass vetchling translocation project has been successful although widespread colonisation has not occurred. Monitoring of the receiver site from 1997-2004 revealed that a small colony of grass vetchling has become established at the receiver site without affecting other plant life in the vicinity. In July 2004 only nine flowering plants were found however there could be more plants, as grass vetchling is a notoriously difficult plant to locate when not in flower. The donor site at Dalmonach, as predicted, was totally destroyed in late 2003 and early 2004 for the development of housing.

References

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A ROE DEER (*CAPREOLUS CAPREOLUS L.*) ON GREAT CUMBRAE ISLAND

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During the last week of July 2004, at least six independent sightings have been made by trustworthy observers (farmers) of a young roebuck on Gt Cumbrae Island in the Firth of Clyde. I have also seen photographs of the animal taken by Mr. David Stevenson that completely substantiate the record.

Deer can certainly swim well. Moore (2002) counted them as being among the naiads of mammals (along with hippopotamuses and elephants). The shortest crossing to Gt Cumbrae Island from the adjacent mainland, where roe deer are abundant, is about 1 km. Even where roe deer are abundant, the general public is often unaware of them, due to their secretive habits and activity mostly being confirmed to less social hours (dawn and dusk).

This individual looks likely to lead a lonely, if well-fed, life. There are no other deer of any species on Gt Cumbrae Island. In 1966, or thereabouts, a single red deer stag was found dead on the shore of Gt Cumbrae Island (it had been shot through the stomach) (Shillaker & Gibson, 1974). There is mention in the book by Campbell (1975) of local memory of roe deer on Gt Cumbrae in the 1920s. There is also supposed to have been a roe deer sighted by one of the local farmers between that date and now (Mr. M. McIntyre, *pers. comm.*) but this seems to be the first completely substantiated record of roe deer on Gt Cumbrae Island.

References

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